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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2591
INFO RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0458
RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE
RUEHXX/GENEVA IO MISSIONS COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0524
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY 0446
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0296
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0310
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 0385
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 0182
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEHDT/AMEMBASSY DILI 1916

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 DILI 000274

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DEPT FOR EAP/MTS; USPACOM FOR JOC AND POLAD; JOINT STAFF FOR J5

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - CLASSIFICATION CHANGED
FROM CONFIDENTIAL TO SECRET

E.O. 12958: DECL: 5/30/2016
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [PHUM](#) [CASC](#) [TT](#)
SUBJECT: EAST TIMOR SITREP FOR MAY 29, 2006

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CLASSIFIED BY: Grover Joseph Rees, Ambassador, U.S. Embassy
Dili, Department of State.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (U) Summary:

PRIME MINISTER MAY ENDORSE PRESIDENT'S ASSUMPTION OF SECURITY
POWERS
MINISTERS OF INTERIOR AND DEFENSE WILL BE REPLACED TOMORROW
ALKATIRI REFUSES TO RESIGN, BUT MAY SOON BE DISMISSED
VIOLENCE SIGNIFICANTLY DOWN, LOOTING CONTINUES
FDTL WITHDRAWS FROM DILI HQ
ADF SUCCESSFULLY RESPONDS TO VIOLENCE REPORTS
SCU FILES COMPROMISED
VISIT TO POLICE CHIEF IN HIDING
LOCAL MEDIA STRUGGLING TO PUBLISH
IDP UPDATE
AMCIT UPDATE
End summary.

PRIME MINISTER MAY ENDORSE PRESIDENT'S ASSUMPTION OF SECURITY
POWERS

¶2. (C) Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri and President Xanana Gusmao agreed yesterday to hold meetings today of the Council of State and the Superior Council for Defense and Security to address the current political and security crises. The President has asked the Council of State to issue a "declaration of crisis" that will give the President direct authority over defense and security, including control of the armed forces (FDTL) and police service (PNTL) for the duration of the crisis. (Note: A "declaration of crisis" is provided for in the Organic Law for FDTL.) The Council of State meeting began at 10 a.m. today (May 29) and as of 9 p.m. the meeting was still underway, but the Council had reportedly agreed to the declaration requested by the President and was in the process of debating proposed personnel changes in senior security positions. See paragraph

14. The Superior Council for Defense and Security meeting has been postponed until tomorrow.

13. (S) Alkatiri and Gusmao met last night at the President's home in advance of the meetings. According to two senior GOET officials were present in the meeting, Gusmao emphasized to Alkatiri that he must agree during the Council of State meeting to the President's assumption of authority over the security forces. When Alkatiri resisted, Gusmao reportedly said that if the Prime Minister would not agree to the proposed declaration he would immediately exercise his constitutional authority to dismiss the Prime Minister. Alkatiri then grudgingly agreed to endorse the President's proposed declaration.

MINISTERS OF DEFENSE AND INTERIOR WILL BE REPLACED TOMORROW

14. (S) According to senior officials who are familiar with the agenda for the Council of State meeting, it will also result in the dismissal of the two senior Cabinet Ministers responsible for defense and security. Minister of Defense Roque Rodrigues will either resign or be dismissed no later than tomorrow and will be replaced by Foreign Minister Jose Ramos-Horta, who will continue to hold the Foreign Affairs portfolio as well as Defense. Minister of the Interior Rogerio Lobato will also resign or be dismissed and will probably be replaced by current Vice Minister of the Interior Alcino Barris, whom the President regards as a reliable supporter. (Barris is currently in refuge at the President's house.) However, Prime Minister Alkatiri is reportedly arguing that Lobato should be replaced not by Barris but by Minister of State Administration Ana Pessoa, who is Alkatiri's closest ally in the Cabinet.

ALKATIRI REFUSES TO RESIGN, BUT MAY SOON BE DISMISSED

15. (S) Embassy has received reports that several members of the
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Council of State asked for Alkatiri's resignation but that he refused. Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta told Ambassador Rees that he himself made a similar request last night, telling the Prime Minister that "there is a virtually unanimous consensus in the country that you should resign" but that Alkatiri "refuses to go." A crowd of several hundred people gathered this morning outside the President's Palace where the Council of State meeting was taking place to demand Alkatiri's immediate resignation, but Gusmao appealed to them to tone down their rhetoric. Nevertheless, both Ramos-Horta and the President's Chief of Staff, Agio Pereira, told Ambassador today that the dismissals of Rodrigues and Lobato "will probably not satisfy the people" and that the President will therefore probably dismiss Alkatiri as soon as the security situation has stabilized.

VIOLENCE SIGNIFICANTLY DOWN, LOOTING CONTINUES

16. (SBU) Yesterday's mob activity continued into the night with an unknown additional number of buildings burned and continued reports of gunfire heard in some neighborhoods. The U.S. Marine Corps Fleet Anti-Terrorist Security (FAST) team protecting the Embassy compound reported about 50 shots heard between 1:00 and 6:00 am in the area behind the compound. Overall, there has been a significant reduction in violence compared with previous days. The hospital reported that only two persons were admitted with injuries related to the ongoing violence: one resulting from a fall and one laceration. Sporadic looting continued as many buildings have been left empty and unguarded.

FDTL WITHDRAWS FROM DILI HQ

17. (U) FDTL appears to have completed its withdrawal from the Military Police headquarters in Caicoli, as well as from the nearby FDTL logistics center. The MP headquarters was thoroughly looted during the day and anti-FDTL / pro-Loromonu (western East Timor) graffiti was painted on the outside wall of the main office building. Embuffs observed looters on the grounds of the logistics center making off with FDTL trucks and

siphoning diesel fuel from the generators. FDTL personnel remain in their headquarters in Tasitolu, just to the west of Dili. There were continued reports through last night of FDTL participation in Australian Defense Force (ADF) enforcement actions, but ADF representatives have denied that FDTL has participated in any ADF operations. The proposed participation of unarmed PNTL "community police officers" in ADF patrols, which had been scheduled to begin today, has reportedly been postponed at least until tomorrow.

AUSTRALIAN FORCES SUCCESSFULLY RESPOND TO VIOLENCE REPORTS

18. (SBU) Yesterday evening a local Embassy staff member residing in an internally displaced persons (IDP) camp reported to Emboffs that his camp was being threatened by a mob. Emboffs notified the Australian Defense Force (ADF), and ADF personnel appeared at the site shortly thereafter and dispersed the mob. While continuing to patrol the camp, the ADF troops requested that the Embassy staff member provide translation services. The staff member reported that camp inhabitants were very happy with the ADF presence and that the mood in the camp relaxed considerably. He has been asked to continue to serve as an ad hoc translator for the ADF whenever they return to the Becora area.

UN DEMANDS INVESTIGATION INTO SHOOTING OF PNTL AND UNPOL

19. (U) UNOTIL today issued a press release calling for a "full investigation and accountability for the shooting of unarmed PNTL/UNPOL officers." The release quotes SRSG Hasegawa as saying, "We consider this incident to be a most serious and reprehensible breach of a tripartite agreement between UNOTIL, PNTL and F-FDTL, and a serious crime in which F-FDTL soldiers shot at disarmed PNTL personnel who were marching peacefully under UN protection and under a UN flag carried by UNOTIL's Chief Military Training Advisor."

SCU FILES COMPROMISED

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110. (U) After hearing reports that the office of the General Prosecutor had been looted and burned, Emboffs visited the site to check on the files from the Serious Crimes Unit (SCU), which conducted the investigations into crimes against humanity committed in 1999. There were no staff on hand and the facilities had been extensively looted. Even as Emboffs visited the site, looters continued to haul away computer equipment. The SCU file facility was open and many of the file cabinets had been pried open. Most of the files appeared to be in place, but it was not possible to determine whether any were missing.

111. (SBU) Emboffs requested both the UN and the ADF provide security to ensure no further compromise or destruction. Shortly after Emboffs called, UN personnel arrived to provide security for the files. Emboffs also contacted Longhinhos Monteiro, the Prosecutor General, to notify him. He said he had requested security for the files from the UN two days ago but had received no response. Fortunately, he said, he assigned a member of his staff to consult with ADF about the weapons stored as evidence from 1999 and ADF subsequently secured the weapons. At about 8:00am, he said, looters managed to open the SCU file storage area but abandoned it after ascertaining that it contained only documents. (Note: The UN has a complete copy of all the SCU files.)

VISIT TO POLICE CHIEF IN HIDING

112. (C) Emboffs today visited National Police Commissioner Paulo Martins at a remote location in the hills outside of Dili, not far from the President's residence. Martins has not been seen in public for over a week. The police hierarchy, which disintegrated during the last week as a result of a systematic campaign of violent attacks by FDTL on PNTL members and facilities, is being reestablished under Alcino Barris, the Vice Minister of Interior. Emboffs' interview with Commissioner Martins will be discussed at greater length in Septel.

LOCAL MEDIA STRUGGLING TO PUBLISH

¶13. (U) East Timor's principal news media, consisting of three daily newspapers and the national radio and television station (RTTL), have been struggling to maintain their operations in recent days. Mob activity in the vicinity of news media offices, including some direct threats against the organizations themselves, has been a major problem. In addition, many staff are either too scared to come to work or have left Dili for the relative safety of the districts. Of the three papers, two have not printed for several days, and the third finally suspended printing yesterday after its staff abandoned its office compound. The papers' editors reported this morning that they were attempting to return to a normal printing schedule tomorrow, but were uncertain whether they could do so at current staffing levels.

¶14. (U) The national radio and television station, RTTL, so far has missed only last night's broadcast and also continues to serve as the single satellite uplink source in Dili for international media on the ground. However, RTTL officials report ongoing threats to their staff and have appealed to the diplomatic community, Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta, and the ADF for a permanent security presence to be established. Ramos-Horta has personally gone to the compound to show his support.

IDP UPDATE

¶15. (U) The Inter-Agency Humanitarian Assistance Group met today to review the internally displaced persons (IDP) situation in Dili. The Group is officially headed by the Government, but UNICEF appears to be the de facto coordinator at present. The international agencies and local and international NGOs that comprise the Group today were able to conduct an assessment of the IDP situation. They found that the current number of Dili IDPs has reached 65,000 at about 35 different sites and that food, water, and sanitation issues are the most urgent. The Group is preparing an appeal for food and supplies to meet

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critical needs. Meanwhile some aid is starting to reach the camps as the Government has resumed food deliveries and other organizations have been able to deliver some water and supplies. However, all assessments and deliveries by NGOs are being done only when UN security is available for escort.

AMCIT UPDATE

¶16. (C) Embassy's current estimate of American citizens remaining in East Timor is 69. We believe up to a dozen of these may have departed well before the current crisis without informing the Embassy. An estimated 44 of these are in Dili, nine in Aileu, and one each in Maliana, Baucau, Tibar, and Oecusse. In addition, the Amcit wife and child of an opposition party leader are in Suai (please protect). We are continuing to work with those Amcits who have expressed a desire to depart and to encourage the remainder to do so.

REES